

## Wiltshire College

### Improving our environmental management

#### Summary

Wiltshire College is a large General Further Education College in the South West region. It has a commitment to Sustainable Development and has been working to improve outcomes for learners, staff and the wider community for four years.

The College is to be accredited with the international standard for environmental management, ISO 14001; one of the most widely recognised environmental standards for organisations in the world. The College wanted to share their journey so others can learn from it.

#### Project partners

We have worked with other South West colleges to share best practice, benefit from the expertise of others and to seek practical solutions to problems through sharing our experiences. We have been able to draw on the expertise within the South West region Estates and Sustainable Development Group, and to benefit from advice and guidance from The Carbon Trust whilst progressing our Carbon Management Plan.

#### The problem

Wiltshire College wanted to further extend its commitment to Sustainable Development (SD) by improving its environmental management.

The College has a large estate on four main campuses and three satellite centres of approximately 100,000m<sup>2</sup>, spread across 55 miles in the county of Wiltshire. The college had benefitted from no major capital projects or campus rebuilds and had a significant backlog of essential estates works on a dated estate, which includes a grade 2 listed building.

We wanted to demonstrate measureable improvements in utilities consumption, cleanliness and appearance, recycling and waste reduction within a framework of best practice in managing environmental aspects.

#### The approach

- To raise awareness across the College of a strategic commitment to Sustainable Development
- To celebrate successes
- To use accredited frameworks to measure ourselves against: BS 8555 to Stage 4 and then ISO 14001, achieving successful incremental stages over four years



#### Institution profile

- Four main campuses over 55 miles
- 4,000 16-18 students
- 6,000 Adult learners
- 800 Higher Education learners
- 850 Apprentices
- £40M turnover
- 1100 Established staff



## Our goals

- To develop a SD steering Group, chaired by the College Principal and including members of staff at all levels, responding to a whole college strategic objective
- To develop 18 SD champions across the four main campuses, with a brief to promote SD awareness
- To appoint a SD champion on the college governing body to raise awareness
- To provide training and development for staff, including the college Principal, to embed awareness of the EMS and support the internal audit function.

## Obstacles and solutions

Obstacles	Solutions
Lack of funds in climate of austerity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined post provided to support development. Champions committed on a voluntary basis</li> <li>• E-resources developed for all staff use on moodle</li> <li>• Administrative support provided for system development</li> </ul>
Shortage of trained internal auditors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal training on audit provided</li> <li>• Principal undertook IEMA training</li> </ul>
Limited engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal communication to raise the profile and seek support.</li> <li>• SD modules of learning promoted with 300 learners</li> <li>• SD modules included in the college enrichment programme for all FT learners. Student projects (tree planting and carbon roadshow) to encourage engagement</li> <li>• SD online training modules provided for staff</li> </ul>
Old and tired Estates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant focus by middle and senior managers on achieving visible and measurable improvements to fabric and cleanliness, within constrained funding</li> </ul>

## Performance and results

The College worked for over four years to achieve Stage 4 of BS 8555 'Acorn' standard. The college was successful at its first attempt in securing accreditation for the whole college on ISO 14001.

Key strengths include:

- In three years (2009-12), we have reduced our electricity consumption by 2,000,000 KWh
- Wiltshire College has made a huge step in integrating environmental awareness into course structures
- ISO 14001 is important for OJEU/Procurement/contract bid frameworks, and in our communities as a USP
- Between 2010/11 and 2011/12 £40,000 was saved on electricity (10% of total spend) and £25,000 saved on Gas, Oil, Burning oil, Calor Gas and 17% reduction in gas consumption (but £14,000 more paid!)
- In 2010/11, the College averaged 55% recycling and in 2011/12 75%
- Our target of reducing our KWh consumption by 5% was exceeded; in 2010/11 we achieved 8% reduction and in 2011/12, 10% reduction



## Lessons learned

- Being clear about the scope of the Environmental Management system is critical; there is a danger it can become over bureaucratic.
- It is important to engage as many staff and students as possible and to keep celebrating successes.
- Publicise utilities saving and other efficiencies achieved to staff. In a climate of public sector cuts, it is helpful for staff to know that the college is doing everything it can to save money, whilst managing its operations and development.

## Further information

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